

Kennington Church of England Academy

Upper Vicarage Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent TN24 9AG

Inspection dates

11–12 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since it opened in 2014, leaders have taken decisive action to secure significant improvements in the school.
- Middle leaders work to ensure that the curriculum is interesting and innovative. Pupils enjoy a wide range of opportunities to develop their creative and philosophical thinking.
- Governors are knowledgeable and highly skilled. They conduct regular, focused checks on the school's performance and are instrumental in driving improvement.
- The multi-academy trust provides highly effective, tailored support to leaders, governors and staff members. Systems in place to monitor and improve the school are comprehensive.
- The personal development, behaviour and welfare of pupils are outstanding. Pupils are respectful, polite and show positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers are skilled, knowledgeable and motivated. Staff at all levels are well supported through meaningful training and the school's coaching programme.
- Leaders and teachers took robust action to improve the teaching of reading in 2017. Pupils are now taught to read well and analyse texts in great detail. Pupils make strong progress in reading.
- Writing is a significant strength across the school. Pupils write engaging and well-structured texts that excite and inform their audience. Progress in writing is excellent.
- Pupils develop secure basic skills in mathematics but do not routinely learn to solve problems or reason. As a result, too few pupils make sufficient progress in mathematics to attain at the highest level.
- Support for disadvantaged pupils is well planned and closely matched to their needs. These pupils attend school regularly and make strong progress.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Leaders and parents work together to plan and deliver support tailored to pupils' specific needs. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics, by:
 - raising the level of challenge for all pupils
 - providing pupils with greater opportunities to solve problems and develop their mathematical reasoning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since it opened in 2014, the leadership team has worked tirelessly to improve every aspect of the school. Their collective will, enthusiasm and drive have revitalised the quality of education provided to pupils.
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the effectiveness of the school. They regularly monitor the quality of teaching, scrutinise pupils' work and check on assessment information to gain a clear insight into the strengths and weaknesses. When performance dips, they quickly deploy additional staff and resources to ensure that pupils catch up rapidly. Leaders are well placed to secure further improvements in the school.
- The quality of teaching has improved because staff receive useful support and training to improve their skills and understanding. For example, every member of staff, including support staff, is assigned a coach with whom they discuss and evaluate their own performance. Staff are able to improve their skills further by becoming a coach to new members of the team. Staff across the school are offered high-quality training and value the opportunity to see good practice in other schools. Staff members feel that their professional development is highly effective and, as a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved rapidly.
- Middle leaders are skilled and ambitious. They know their subject areas very well and provide useful guidance to colleagues to improve their teaching further. For example, middle leaders noted a decline in reading standards earlier this year. They took decisive action to improve the teaching of reading and procured high-quality resources to support pupils in class. Pupils' progress in reading has accelerated across the school. Leaders correctly identified that weaknesses in mathematics are evident and are taking suitable action to rectify this. At the time of the inspection, it was too early to assess the impact of these changes.
- Staff at all levels are involved in the planning and evaluation of the school's improvement. All staff receive a fortnightly update on the progress of the school's development and are invited to contribute to the evaluation. Staff are unanimous in their view that the school is well led and managed.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used well to increase their progress, attainment and well-being. The family liaison officer works with pupils and their families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are ready to learn. In class, additional support is offered to pupils to ensure that they understand the work and are suitably challenged. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make strong progress.
- The assistant headteacher has a clear understanding of the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. She works closely with families and external agencies to determine the best use of additional funding and provide pupils with the support they need to succeed. Teaching assistants offer highly effective support to develop pupils' skills, understanding and independence. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enjoy school and achieve well.

- The sports premium is used effectively to improve pupils' engagement, progress and participation in physical activity. Sports coaches support teachers by providing useful professional development. As a result, the quality of teaching in physical education has improved. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to participate in activities. Clubs such as lacrosse, golf, non-contact boxing, dance and country dancing appeal to pupils' interests. Pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are offered additional opportunities to participate in sporting activities and any barriers to participation are removed sensitively. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy sport and are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting. All pupils in Year 4 learn to play the ukulele and perform in a concert for their families. Pupils across the school learn to code simple games in computing lessons. Writing is a particular strength and is used in a range of subjects to help pupils to convey their understanding. For example, Year 5 pupils wrote the diary of a Second World War evacuee, clearly articulating the feelings and experiences of children who survived the blitz. Pupils learn about a range of religions and talk respectfully about their own and others' beliefs. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The multi-academy trust has provided the school with bespoke and highly effective support since becoming the sponsor in 2014. Trust officers know the school well and offer just the right level of support and challenge to leaders. They have been instrumental in securing strong leadership, staff development and independent advice for governors and leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governors are inquisitive, challenging and responsive. They use a wide range of appropriate evidence to form an accurate view of the school's performance, and challenge leaders to do even better. For example, governors recently attended a moderation meeting to review the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They used this information to evaluate the quality of education provided to pupils.
- Governors work closely with leaders and staff to monitor and develop the plans for school improvement. Governors conduct spot checks on the key elements of the improvement plan and use the information they gather to provide additional resources or modify plans when actions do not have the desired effect. Governors, rightly, recognise that the planning to achieve the school's equalities objectives is not of the same high quality as the school's development plans.
- Governors wisely use external assessments to moderate their own evaluations. For example, they commissioned a pupil premium review to check on the school's systems for supporting disadvantaged pupils, and used the recommendations to improve the provision for these pupils. They work closely with the multi-academy trust to ensure that governors' skills, training and evaluations are up to date and accurate.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Checks on staff are thorough, robust and meet statutory requirements. Records and staff files are well maintained. Staff receive thorough induction training on child protection procedures when they join the school and all staff undertake useful safeguarding training annually.
- Staff are knowledgeable and vigilant. When concerns are raised, leaders work closely with the appropriate agencies to safeguard pupils from harm.
- Governors, leaders and the multi-academy trust conduct useful checks to ensure that systems are in place to safeguard pupils. For example, health and safety audits are stored in a shared file and monitored by governors. Recent changes to the school's site, such as new fences and the remodelled reception area, have improved security and ensure that pupils are protected while in school.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know how to 'stop, block and flag' if they are contacted by strangers online. Parents attend the regular 'surgeries' during which they can access useful advice from the school's safeguarding leaders and the family liaison officer.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Relationships between pupils and adults in class are excellent. Pupils understand what is expected of them and work diligently, showing great motivation and resilience. Lessons are characterised by a calm, positive and purposeful atmosphere.
- Pupils read with teachers and volunteer readers from the local community. Pupils enjoy reading and relish the opportunity to visit the well-stocked library. Improvements in the reading curriculum have strengthened pupils' comprehension skills. As a result, the majority of pupils make strong progress in reading.
- The teaching of writing is a significant strength. Staff skilfully teach pupils to combine their knowledge of grammar, punctuation and spelling with different writing styles to produce interesting and sophisticated texts. Pupils enthusiastically discuss the editing of their work with peers in class and suggest how to improve their vocabulary. Pupils across the school make rapid progress in writing and a high proportion write at the higher standard.
- Teachers use their extensive subject knowledge to skilfully guide pupils in lessons. They use questions to probe and deepen pupils' understanding of subjects. Feedback typically requires pupils to think deeply and explain their understanding. Nevertheless, pupils are not consistently challenged in mathematics to complete complex tasks or further their understanding. Consequently, too few pupils, particularly the most able, attain at the higher standard in mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and offer effective support to pupils in class, particularly those who are disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to plan tailored teaching strategies and offer pupils just the right amount of support. They are well trained and, when appropriate, deliver bespoke interventions to support pupils. For example, dyslexic pupils receive effective additional teaching in phonics. Pupils who are disadvantaged or have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress.

- Staff at all levels receive and provide coaching for each other. This enables staff to consider their effectiveness and how to improve further. Staff are encouraged to try new methods and readily share and discuss their ideas. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved across the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils and adults enjoy exceptionally strong relationships. High levels of trust and respect are evident throughout the school. One pupil commented, 'The staff are calm, nice and always have time for us.'
- Pupils learn to make healthy life choices and combine their activities with fundraising for good causes. Recently, a group of pupils walked 10 kilometres with the headteacher to raise money for a local hospice. Every pupil took part in the school's sponsored assault course, running, climbing and getting very muddy in the process. Pupils take great pride in their active lifestyles and reflect upon the reasons to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted exceptionally well. They reflect deeply on subjects such as religious education and science. For example, pupils carefully consider the similarities and differences between creation and natural selection. Pupils share their views eloquently, both orally and in writing. They listen attentively to others' opinions and consider these carefully before making their own points. Pupils develop excellent communication skills that prepare them well for life in a rapidly changing society.
- Pupils know how to manage their feelings and understand that their actions have consequences. For instance, pupils learn about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and think deeply about their responsibility to respect the rights of others. Each class of pupils creates and signs up to their own rules to form their 'class charter'. Pupils throughout the school are extremely mindful of their actions and the impact they have on others.
- The promotion of pupils' mental well-being is first class. Pupils are taught how to relax through meditation and mindfulness. Many attend the recently introduced tai chi classes to learn greater control of their bodies and breathing patterns. In upper key stage 2, pupils study philosophy and use this to expand their perspective and consider solutions to their problems.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are kind and courteous. They show respect to staff, visitors and each other. As a result, the school is a warm and friendly place to learn.

- Pupils show determination and grit when completing tasks. They listen attentively and start their work with zeal. Pupils respond well to the additional challenge offered by teachers, aided by their excellent writing skills. As one pupil noted, 'I like being challenged, it helps me learn.'
- During playtimes, pupils play with great enthusiasm. Pupils are well supervised and know how to ask for help when needed. Disagreements are rare and, when they do occur, staff help pupils to talk through and overcome their differences. Pupils note that bullying is not a problem in the school; however, if problems do arise, staff are good at dealing with them.
- The use of 'restorative justice' has a considerable impact upon pupils' behaviour in school. When pupils' behaviour falls below the level expected, pupils and staff discuss what happened and encourage pupils to reflect on the causes of their poor behaviour. Pupils create a plan to prevent further indiscretions. As a result, incidents of repeated poor behaviour are uncommon.
- Pupils attend school regularly and absence levels are reducing. The level of attendance for disadvantaged pupils has risen steadily over the past year. Sensitive support from leaders and the family liaison officer ensures that families are given top-notch support to increase their children's attendance when required.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected standard in writing was well above that of their peers nationally, and was broadly in line in mathematics. A high proportion of pupils attained at the higher standard in writing. However, only a small proportion attained at the higher standard in mathematics.
- The proportion of Year 6 pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, reaching the expected level of attainment in reading in 2017 was below the national average. Leaders' and governors' actions to tackle weaknesses in reading were swift and effective. Improvements to the curriculum and quality of teaching of reading have successfully reversed the decline in standards. As a result, pupils across the school, including those who are disadvantaged, now make good progress, with a high proportion of pupils making rapid progress.
- Pupils write exceptionally well in a range of subjects. Writing across the school shows flair and imagination. For example, a pupil in Year 6, when describing her fictional encounter with a dinosaur, wrote, 'a thunderous roar reverberated around the forest'. Pupils use their writing well across the curriculum to describe historical events, hypothesise on scientific experiments and to explain their philosophical viewpoints in religious education. Pupils throughout the school make rapid progress in writing. A high proportion of pupils attain at a high standard.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the basics of mathematics. Throughout the school, pupils use their knowledge of calculation to solve equations of increasing difficulty. Nevertheless, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to use their mathematical skills to solve problems or to reason. As a result, most pupils attain at the expected standard but few, including the most able, attain at the higher standard.
- Disadvantaged pupils are given useful support to help them to make accelerated

progress. Leaders use the additional funding effectively to provide extra help in lessons. For example, teaching assistants monitor each pupil closely in lessons and step in quickly to support pupils when they are stuck, or to offer additional challenge. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils are making progress equal to, and sometimes above, their peers in school.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well by staff throughout the school. Pupils receive just the right amount of support and are encouraged to develop their independence and resilience in lessons. Tasks are appropriately adapted and broken down into small steps so that pupils can access and complete work that matches their levels of understanding. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong progress from their starting points.

School details

Unique reference number	141329
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10036795

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	338
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Heather Ashdown
Headteacher	Katie Wratten
Telephone number	01233 623744
Website	www.kenningtonacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@kennington.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Kennington Church of England Academy opened in September 2014 as part of the Aquila Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- This is a larger-than-average-sized junior school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly lower than the national average.
- The school met the government's floor standards in 2016, which are the minimum

requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 14 parts of lessons, some with senior leaders.
- In addition to discussions with parents, 63 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account, including 51 free-text comments.
- A range of the school's documentation was scrutinised to gather information on: leaders' evaluation of the school's performance; systems for managing the performance of teachers; behaviour and safety of pupils; safeguarding; the progress and attainment of pupils; and curriculum leadership.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website to evaluate the quality of information for parents and whether the school meets statutory publishing requirements.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views and heard pupils read.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, representatives from the governing body, including the chair, and officers from the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Daniel Lambert, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Wibroe	Ofsted Inspector

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